

## Message Text

SECRET

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61

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

----- 033892

R 221229Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4260

INFO AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL MUNICH

S E C R E T BUCHAREST 4156

EXDIS

EUR FOR ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARMITAGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RO

SUBJ: POSSIBLE EFFECT OF SHARING VOA-RADIO FREE EUROPE  
FACILITIES

REF: STATE 195846/1

1. OUR RESPONSE TO REFTEL IS BASED ON FOLLOWING PREMISES:

A. RFE SIGNAL IN ROMANIA IS VASTLY SUPERIOR TO VOA'S

B. REF LISTENERSHIP IN ROMANIA IS VASTLY GREATER

BECAUSE OF (1) BETTER PROGRAMMING, (2) SUBSTANTIALLY  
LONGER BROADCASTING DAY, (3) SUPERIOR RECEPTION.

2. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT RFE SHARING OF VOA  
FACILITIES WOULD NOT ELICIT ANY GOR REACTION FUNDAMENTALLY  
DETRIMENTAL TO OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. WE ALSO CON-  
SIDER IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT ROMANIANS WOULD COMMENCE  
JAMMING VOA SIMPLY BECAUSE OF A SHARING OF FACILITIES.

SIMILARLY, WE ARE DUBIOUS THAT GOR WOULD USE OPPORTUNITY  
TO START A PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE VOICE. FINALLY,

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UNLESS RFE WERE TO GO COMPLETELY OFF THE DEEP END (AND WE

DETECT NO EVIDENCE OF SUCH INCLINATION IN THEIR CURRENT ROMANIAN BROADCASTS), WE JUDGE THE CHANCES TO BE LIMITED THAT THE ROMANIANS WOULD GO SO FAR AS TO SEEK -- EITHER ALONE OR MUCH LESS IN LEAGUE WITH OTHER EE NATIONS -- TO PUT PRESSURE ON THIRD COUNTRIES TO SHUT DOWN VOA TRANSMITTERS CARRYING RFE BROADCASTS, THOUGH CEAUSESCU'S HELSINKI SPEECH TOOK A SWIPE AT STATIONS THAT INTERFERE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. BUT IT IS RFE PROGRAM CONTENT IF ANYTHING NOT USE OF TRANSMITTERS THAT WILL BE IMPORTANT. THUS FROM A PURELY BILATERAL VIEWPOINT WE CONTINUE NOT TO BE OPPOSED TO A SHARING OF FACILITIES.

3. FOREGOING COMMENTS RELATE SOLELY TO BILATERAL CONTEXT OF PROBLEM. FROM A BROADER PERSPECTIVE WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT LEGAL AND POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE USE BY REF OF VOA TRANSMITTERS IN UK, GERMANY, GREECE, MOROCCO AND LIBERIA. IF FUTURE USE OF THESE TRANSMITTERS BY VOA WERE TO BE JEOPARDIZED BY SHARING ARRANGEMENT, THEN WE RECOMMEND OPTION A (REFTEL) ON PREMISE THAT THE LONG RANGE INTEREST OF THE U.S. IS THE MAINTENANCE OF VOA BROADCASTING FACILITIES IN THESE COUNTRIES. WE BELIEVE THIS INTEREST TO BE SUPERIOR TO THAT OF THOSE TRANSITORY INTERESTS WE HAVE IN SUPPORTING RFE BROADCASTS AT THEIR CURRENT LEVEL.

4. IF LEGAL PROBLEMS RELATED TO SHARING OF FACILITIES CAN BE OVERCOME, SINCE VOA SIGNAL INTO ROMANIA IS ALREADY NOT GOOD AND VOICE PROGRAMMING IS NOT COMPARABLE TO POPULARITY TO RFE'S, THEN WE SUPPORT OPTION C. WE ARE UNABLE TO COMMENT ON THE MERIT OF OPTION B BECAUSE WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE MEANING IS OF PHRASE QTE SUBSTANTIAL SERVICE AT PEAK MORNING AND LATE NIGHT LISTENING UNQTE. IF TERM "SUBSTANTIAL" IMPLIES MORE THAN 60 PERCENT FIGURE NOTED IN OPTION C, THEN WE BECOME AN INSTANT SUPPORTER OF OPTION B, SINCE WE HAVE NO REAL INTEREST IN REDUCING QUALITY OF VOA SIGNAL STILL FURTHER.

5. IN SUMMARY, WE ARE STRONG SUPPORTERS OF CONTINUED RFE BROADCASTS TO ROMANIA FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE. WE THINK RFE'S IMPACT IN THIS COUNTRY MORE EFFECTIVE THAN VOA'S.

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WE WOULD NOT WISH TO SEE PRESENT SERVICE SUBSTANTIALLY DIMINISHED. BUT EQUALLY IMPORTANT WE DO NOT WANT FUTURE OF VOA EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN BROADCASTING FACILITIES SERIOUSLY IMPAIRED IN ORDER TO MEET INTERIM RFE BROADCASTING REQUIREMENTS.  
BARNES

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NNN

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